Creative Brief - Spring 2014

Spring is in the Air

Welcome to the Spring 2014 Spaces Images Creative Brief. Spring is here and the time is right for shooting in the streets, or anywhere else for that matter. Yes, the long winter is behind us and there is nothing like the sun to get us all out and motivated to make magic. We will cover some fun stuff this quarter, from what is selling well and explanations why those images are strong sellers, to some fun new gadgets that have emerged to hopefully make tomorrow easier than today. You know the drill, grab your favorite beverage, turn the lights down, and relax. Let's talk stock.

Model Releases:
What you need to know

We have recently been encouraging all of our contributors the option of adding models to their Spaces submissions. It has been exciting to see new work coming in that incorporates people into your locations. There are some great ideas that we might not have considered that are being executed brilliantly.

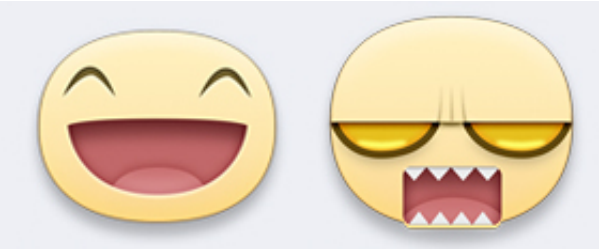
With the growth of the company that now includes models as part of our visual message, it is more important than ever to make sure you are following all the rules that are expected when dealing with models and obtaining model releases. We have been shooting lifestyle imagery for the stock industry for 16 years and we want to share everything we have learned about what to watch out for when adding models to your work flow.

We are also adding a great article presented by PDN that addresses this issues and has some of the pro's feedback on the legal concerns and needs for model releases.

One of the hardest parts for most photographers in obtaining a model release is how to approach models to see if they are interested in being a part of your next photo shoot without appearing too creepy or weird. This is one area in photography where being a man is not helpful. If anything, you have to be far more careful and genuine, especially when approaching models of the opposite sex.

We have learned a few tricks over the years that have helped us immensely in the art of "model hunting" and we thought it would be helpful to share some of those tricks with you to ease the fears or concerns of approaching strangers.

-Approach-



We find that if you start off in a place that people like to be seen, you will get a much higher return for your efforts. The gym is a great place to find healthy, fit models who are excited that someone found them attractive or that they had the right look to be a model. They are there every day trying to make themselves look and feel better, so they may not let on, but trust me, they are excited that you approached them. Clubs, parties, or any place you can get one on one time with people in an environment where they feel being approached is part of that environment, the better your results will be. On the other hand, a library may not be the place to find extroverts that are up for a chat, so start to pay attention to where and when approaching someone is reasonable and you will start to find some of your best results.

When you first see a person you feel would be good for a future shoot, we find that quick and clear is the best approach. Too much information and you might scare them off. Not enough information and you leave them unsure. When we approach a potential model that we feel has the look for a possible future shoot, this is our basic strategy that has worked very well for 16 years...

We watch the individual first. Just because they have the look that might work for our shoot doesn't mean they will be the right person. There is another factor that is far more important than their appearance. What you are looking for is a sense of comfort within the person themselves. The more confident (not loud and verbose but CONFIDENT) the model appears when they are interacting with others, the better chance you will have of them being open to your presentation. Also, you are watching to see if they are an extrovert or introvert, We won't say you cannot work with introverts, but we are of the mind set that says there are 7 billion people on the planet, I just want to go after the ones that might say YES, and are going to offer a win/win for the days efforts.

There is little use in approaching someone that does not appear to be happy with themselves, so seek out the positive energy, it's all around you. If we can find that glimmer in someone's eye, we know that we have a much better chance of them showing up, having fun, and not being afraid of new adventures. This sounds like a very broad brush stroke we are referring to, but as you start to watch people you will see who will and who will not enjoy a day as a model.

That word "ENJOY" is the biggest part of why people are going to work with you. If you can seek out people that find the event itself a fun idea, then your cost to that model is going to be much less about the money and more about the experience. When you achieve this, your final results will hit the mark more often. That said, it will be up to you to make the experience fun if you want the word to travel from one model to the next. The rolling snow ball analogy is a good one here. It takes time to get started but as you continue to approach people and work with them they start to share their experience with their friends and family and more models will start to contact you directly, eventually leaving you with more models than you ever thought you could obtain.

So you have watched your person of choice and feel they are the right fit. Now you must present an honest comfortable approach to allow your message to be heard. We will share the same approach we have used for 16 years. We haven't changed our opening in that time because it has worked so well.

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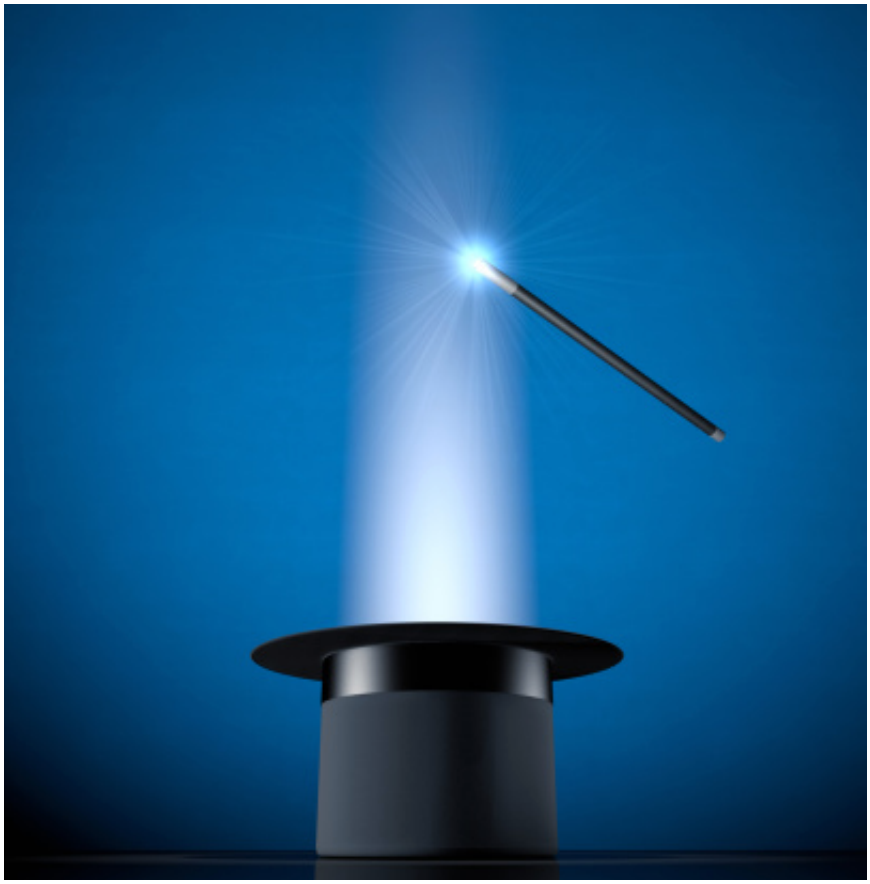
"Hi my name is Jonathan, (handing my business card) I don't want to bother you, but do you have just a quick second? I caught you out of the corner of my eye and I just love your (fill in the blank)" If it is a woman with her kids, tell her you have been watching her kids and they are so much fun (This must be sincere. You cannot make up something, but you can always share with that person what attracted you to them in the first place). "I am a professional photographer and am always on the lookout for new models for our advertising campaigns. If that sounds at all interesting to you, take a moment when you have a chance to look over our website. We have a lot of images that will help give you an idea of what we do. It is much easier to take a look at our work than for me to take up your time trying to explain everything here. Our contact information is on the card. If you take a look and think it would be fun, feel free to contact us and we can explain in more detail what we offer for your time. We are not trying to sell you anything, we just love your look and your energy and we feel you would make a great model(s)" (If it's a group, make sure you include all of them in your presentation, purely out of respect for the others involved even if you are only after one). "We pay well and once again it is completely professional. Thanks for your time and have a great day, you just made mine."

A lot of people will just say thank you and be on their way, but even if they do not contact you they will be happy that someone felt they were model material. If they don't contact you, chalk it up to good Karma and move onto the next person. This is something you can do whenever you are out and about and see potential talent.

-Tricks to keep you out of Trouble-



We realize that some of the information we offer below seems rather obvious, but it is important that when we are offering advice that we follow the letter of the law, so bare with us if you feel you are already aware of some of the legal issues.

First, we need to be dealing directly with legal adults. If it's a group of teenagers you can still give them your card and your brief description but be very clear that you would love to speak to their parents if they are interested.

The need to be careful is the most serious area of concern and cannot be overstated. It is even better if you are out with someone else rather than on your own, especially if the other person accompanying you is of the opposite sex. We also want to be aware that we all represent every photographer that will come after us. Don't make the world a tougher place for photographers

because you don't treat people with the respect and professionalism that they deserve.

Alright, so you have your model all picked out they're excited about being the next super model making millions. What other areas do you need to take into consideration?

We like it when a model is accompanied by a friend or family member to the shoot. It offers a bit more security for the new model's first time and allows you to meet another potential model at the same time. If they are minors, they must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. If one is not available DO NOT continue until there is someone of age that is their legal representative on the set. Tell them you are very sorry, but you will not be able to work together that day as they need to have someone that is legally responsible for them present during the entire time you are working together.

The most important part of this entire process is being very upfront about how the images might be used. They cannot be used in any illegal sense, but we also cannot guarantee them that it won't end up in the advertising market on a product or subject that they might not personally support. Once again I go back to the mind set that there are 7 billion people on the planet. If you see ANY red flags when you are presenting to the potential model as far as what and how the images might be used, then we suggest you move on to the next subject that doesn't show concern.

Now that you have all your T's crossed and your I's dotted, it's time to work right? Nope, not yet!

We need to have the model sign the release before we snap a single picture. Along with your model's signature and your own signature you will also need a witness signature to keep this all legal. We suggest this person be someone that you yourself bring. You can use one of the model's family or friends as a witness, but in the long run these are their people and if anything ever did come up we would feel much more confident that the witness is someone we know and trust.

This next tip is probably the one thing that is going to cover you more than anything else we offer. We started doing this years ago. I am not sure when we came up with the idea but it is just one more step you can take to secure your business from anything negative that could arise at a later date.

Once you have the release signed and the model is standing there with your witness, take your camera and have your model and your witness stand together holding the model release between them and snap a head shot that includes the release. Keep a Raw file of the image. Now you have a copy of your model release signed with the model and the witness in a Raw file to store away with your other files from the shoot. They cannot say they didn't sign the release and they cannot say they didn't understand. You have them, their release and your witness all on a file ready to support any issues that might come up at a later date. This is just one more step in reassuring yourself that nothing will come back to haunt you down the road.

With over 15,000 of our own lifestyle images shot for stock we have never had an issue with a model release and we have never been sued. We have had nothing but happy models and families returning for more work. This makes you shine and makes other models want to work with you. It keeps everything clear and up front for both you and the model. If for some reason the model you worked with was not of good character, they wouldn't consider trying to take advantage of you after the steps you have taken to cover yourself.

All this said, we don't want to scare you away from working with models. On the contrary, we want to make it fun for both you and the model and make sure both of you understand the contract you have agreed upon. For more information on model releases, click the below link from PDN to access a great story on model releases and what to pay attention to. Still need more feedback to feel safe and secure? That's why we are here. Please feel free to email us with any questions that we may not have covered and we will be happy to answer them all for you.

Click HERE for the PDN article.

- Outsourcing your Workflow From Key Wording to Retouching -

In the stock industry, different production companies range in size. Some of you are a one person

team wearing many hats, whereas some others are a group of image makers, each with separate skills and responsibilities. Either way we all have one thing in common, there are going to be months when your work flow needs some support. We would like to present a company that we feel offers the very best in retouching, as well as many other areas of image production. Here is a detailed list of all the services that *Easy Resource* provides.

-Key-wording and Metadata Information Services-

Creative Key-wording - both stills and footage (video clips) - $0.85/Image
Editorial Key-wording - $0.70/Image
Keyword Cleansing & Correction (QC) - $0.70/Image
Metadata information management (i.e. Model release info extraction, categorizing images for risk and for 'similar images') - Contact for Prices
Keyword translation - $0.50/Image

-Footage Services-

Logo and unwanted object removal - $4.00/Clip
Color correction - $4.00/Clip
Skin, hair and beauty work - $8.00/Clip
Compositing of multiple clips - $8.00/Clip
Preparing clips to required codec - $0.80/Clip
Extracting/inserting metadata from/to the information fields of clips - $0.80/Clip
Watermarking - $0.80/Clip
Editing down to Picture Library standard clip lengths - $4.00/Clip

-Image Research-

Research Services across multiple picture libraries (Stills and Video Clip Footage) - $14.00/Hour

-Stills Image Services-

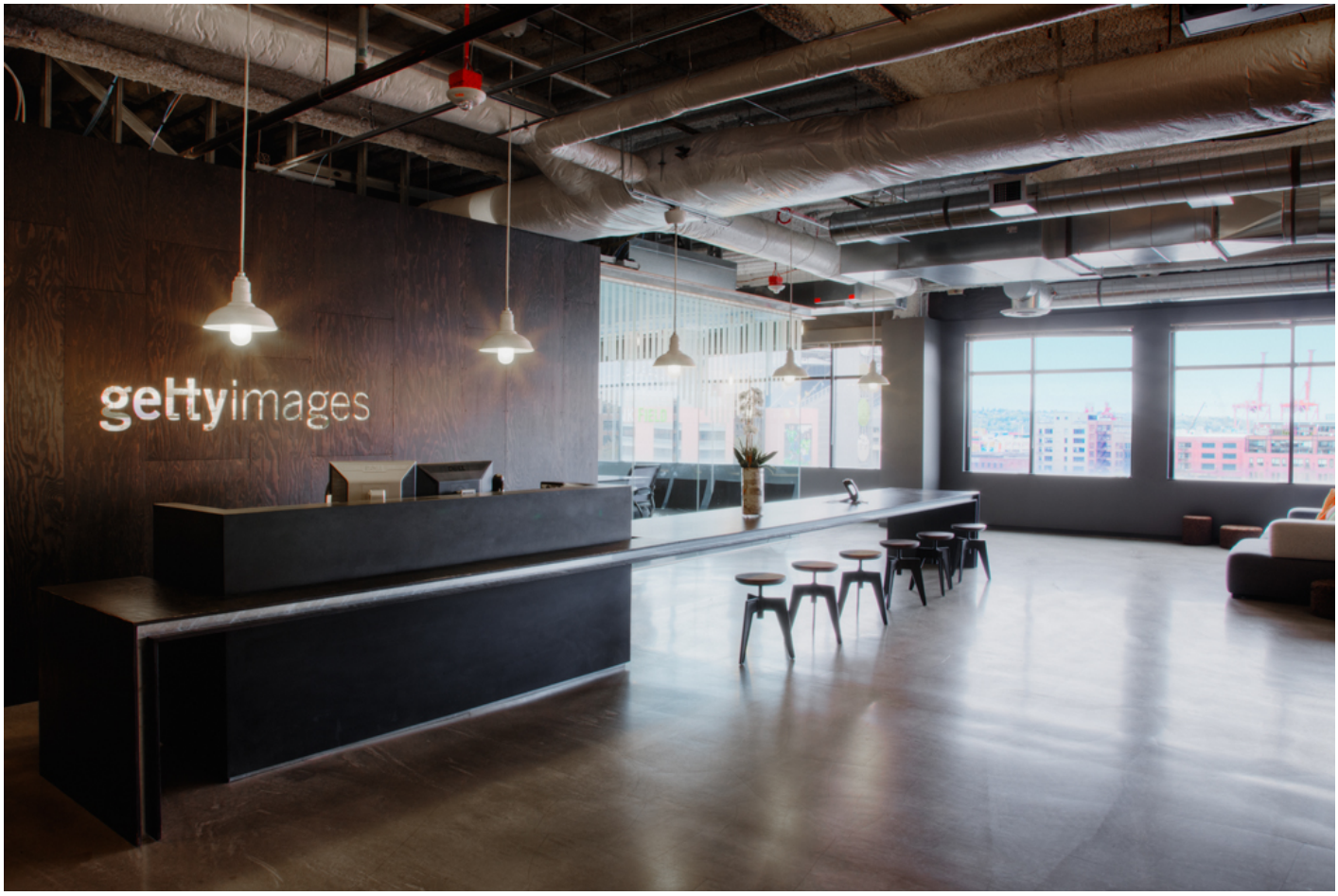
RAW conversions - $0.55/Image
Retouching & Advanced Image Manipulation of stills images - $3.00/Image
Image QC and preparations for submission to image libraries - $0.40/Image
Conceptualizing & Creating New Images from Existing Stock - $$20.00/Hour
Creating Flash Animations from Existing Stock - $10.00/Flash
Creating vectorized eps files from rasterized tif or jpeg illustration files - $3.50/Image

-Scanning-

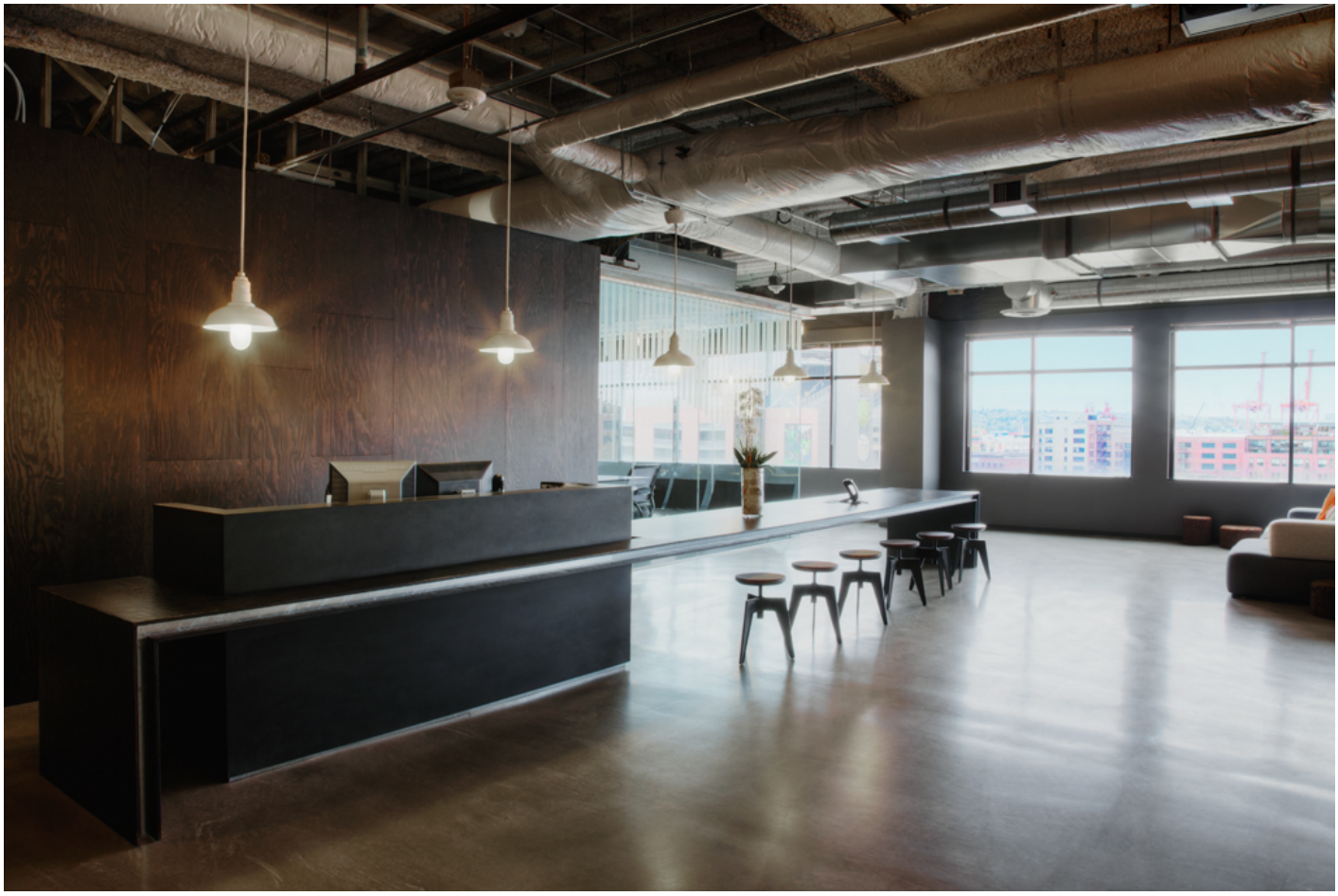
Scanning of prints, transparencies, negatives - $0.50/Image
Recording of printed and handwritten information - $0.20/Image
Cleaning of scanned stills images - $0.60/Image

As they say "The proof is in the pudding", so let's take a second to look at an image they did for our own production at Andersen Ross.

Here is an image we had retouched by Easy Resource a couple months back. This is an image of the reception area at the headquarters of Getty Images here in Seattle. Getty were willing to let Francis Zera and myself in to shoot their facility in trade for some Panoramic stills for them to use in house.



This first image is of the front desk at Getty images. You will see in the first example that the Getty Logo is cut into the wood grained wall and is also covered by some star flares from the existing lighting in the foreground.



Now look at the retouched version. They have removed the Logo from the wood grain and held the grain perfectly, all the veins run together. You can go into the wood grain at 300% and you will not see one part of the wood wall's grain not match up. It is seamless. The star flares are also just how we photographed them originally. What appears like a simple retouch was actually very complicated and detailed work.

We feel this is a great example of retouching that is way beyond our capabilities. Even if we could match all the wood grain perfectly and keep the flares in the foreground, the time we would have spent on this image would have been much less cost effective than the $11 it cost us to have Easy Resource retouch it for us.

We cannot say enough about these guys. They have always been prompt and professional with no hidden charges appearing at the last minute. We don't expect everyone to use their service, but we would suggest using them when you have a very strong location but are lacking the skills to achieve your desired results. If you have any questions or would like a formal introduction please

contact us and we will be happy to hook you up.

Click HERE to visit their site for more information.

- Cool New Stuff -

The speed at which technology is moving keeps us all feeling like we have to change up our game every few years. Sometimes it would be nice if it all slowed down for just a bit before the next "gotta have it" gadget comes out. We try to offer information that we feel will eventually be relevant to your work, be it now or a few years from now. This next change in camera technology is something we are certain will make our old DSLR's a thing of myth and mystery over the coming years, but has that time arrived already? Let's find out.

We chose to review the strongest new player in the market, the Sony A7. It is here that the standards have finally started to catch up with what pro's need. The A7 offers a mirror-less full

frame sensor at 24.3 megapixels. It weighs in at just 27.1 oz with the included batteries and kit lens (28-70mm). The A7 is also nice and compact at 5.0 x 3.7 x 1.9 in.

For this review, we are going to talk strictly about files since at the end of the day that is what we as professionals are all about. If you want to know what every button and gadget does on this new Sony we have added a link to the best review we have found out there in cyberspace. Click the link below for a detailed review of the A7 and its specs.

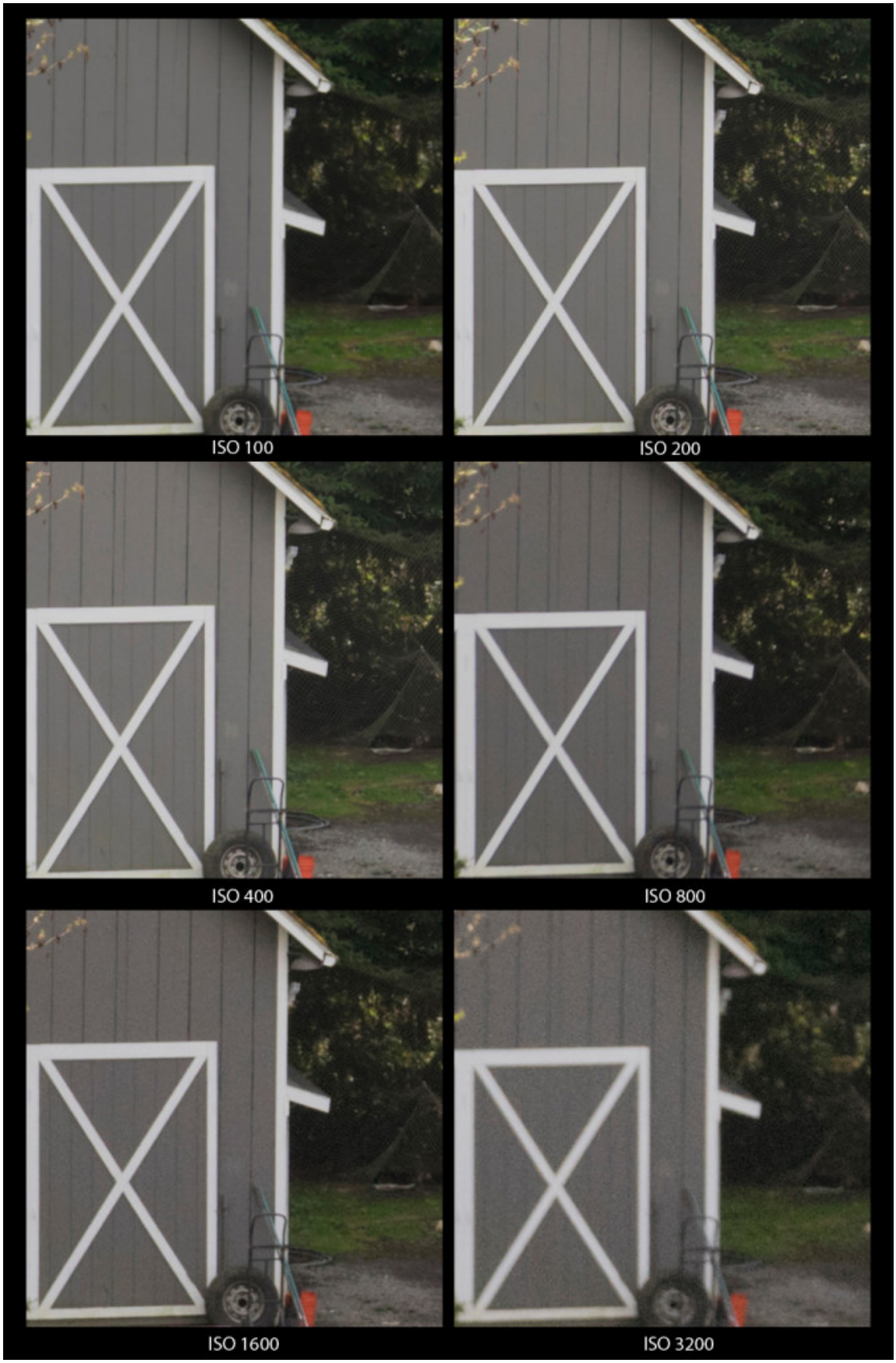
Click HERE for A7 Review

What we want to discuss is the quality of the file itself and how it measures up to the full frame DSLR's we have become accustomed to. We wanted to shoot this first hand as we have never been convinced of reviews until we see the files for ourselves. The three areas we will focus on are noise, file quality, and processing.

-ISO and Noise-

A great deal of Spaces Images' content relies on the use of longer exposures for depth of field. We did a test shooting the same subject from ISO 100-3200. Long story short the noise levels were very reasonable and you will see from the files that the noise started to become an issue at about 1200, but with some extra help from software we could take it to about 1600 before we had any issues that could not be fixed.

The ISO levels are very strong for a camera at the A7's price point. You can see as always, the lower the ISO the better the results, but through our processing of the files in post with the help of just a few tricks we were able to get strong files up to ISO 2500. One thing you will be sure of is once you put this little thing on a tripod and click the shutter there will be no camera shake now that the mirror has been removed. That doesn't mean you need to get rid of your DSLR though as this can still be achieved on your DSLR by placing it in mirror lock mode, making the main reason for purchasing a camera like the A7 more about size and weight than anything else.


ISO 100
ISO 200
ISO 400
ISO 800
ISO 1600
ISO 3200

-Raw Processing-

Here we tested the A7 at normal ISO settings from 100-3200. Each image we are sharing was processed with the same settings and shot at the same aperture but at different levels of ISO.

This is where the train started to come off the tracks. Our most negative experience with the camera came when we had to process the files. We all expected Adobe to be the go-to app, as it has been for most of our processing needs, but for now, until Adobe unravels Sony's secrets, it appears that a combination of conversion produces the best results.

Rather than bore you with our interpretation, below is a link to an excellent workflow for processing a raw file for the Sony A7 from "Bart the Leica Boss". These are the directions that have proven to produce the best results from a Sony A7 raw file and are how we processed all of our test files.

Click HERE for the workflow.

The biggest issue is that Sony has attached settings to the Raw files like, sharpening, highlight compression, etc. These are embedded in the RAW file and can only be removed in Sony's processor. So it is a lengthy two step process where you have to turn off all of the Sony garbage before we make it into a Tiff and then apply the needed filters and curves in Photoshop or Lightroom to get your final result. We tried using Adobe 8.3 converter and converting the RAW to .dng, but once again the images have to be run through the Sony software to turn off all the silly stuff, so this approach was not an option. Take a look at the above link and you will see just what we are talking about.

Until Sony starts playing nice with software developers and lets them have the access to turn off these issues, you are always going to have to process these files in Sony's software first, leaving our happy playground of Lightroom and Adobe Raw unable to work the way we want.

Is there more work to do before they replace our high end DSLR's? OH YEA, there is a lot more work to come before these new cameras match what we professionals have become accustomed to, but with technology moving at warp speed we feel this is the start to what will become the norm in a very short time.

Can you use them to capture image data that will meet the specifications of the stock industry? Our general feedback would be Yes, but you will do more post work than should be needed. The biggest issue is the post workflow. It would just take a lot of post work and the workflow is slightly different with each file. To have to work each file differently to make each one passable is not what we want on our next shoot.

As professionals we need to get solid data out of our equipment every time. Without that security it is tough to call yourself a professional or produce professional results. If you are looking to drop a large chunk of change on an extra camera that is easier to store, then this is a great camera, but as for it replacing your high end DSLR, well, don't sell your reliable just yet. We are very certain that this is the way of the future, but for now it is just that, in the future

UPDATE: Since our review of the A7, Sony has announced an updated model, the A7s which includes the addition of 4K video. We are excited to hear about the addition of 4K to this new Hybrid camera.

It was only a couple of years ago that we first started to embrace 4K. What was once a very expensive investment, may have just gotten a lot more affordable. Reports are that the new Sony will list around $3,350 but that is just rumor at this time. For now, take a moment to watch some of the first video that is out from the new A7s by clicking the link bellow.

Make sure to pay attention to the changes in ISO, shutter speed, and lenses that are posted in the bottom left of the video as they are constantly changing while the video quality remains very consistent from cut to cut after post.

As the new A7s becomes available to the public we will do a follow up review on what appears to be an amazing new addition to the Sony family. The link below will take you to the review. Scroll down just a bit to find the videos.

Click HERE for the A7s Review

- Andersen Ross Photography: New Horizons -

One of the reasons we were looking at this Sony A7 in particular was to shoot from UAV's. We are in the process of investing in UAV's (Unmanned Arial Vehicles) to start shooting stills and videos for stock. The idea of getting a large file from such a light weight camera looked like the perfect match.

After reviewing the Sony A7 we have decided to go with a much larger UAV that can hold a much heavier payload so we can work with the equipment that will get the job done properly. Over time we are going to see lighter and lighter camera's that produce exceptional imagery and this will allow us all to get angles and images we never thought possible in the past for a fraction of the cost it does now.

As Andersen Ross Photography sets off on this new direction of image capture, we will be sharing

all of our experiences with one of the neatest new gadgets we have seen in some time, the Movi M5. The combination of the Movi M5 and the use of UAV's will allow us to get our cameras in places and capture images we only dreamed of before.

Either together or separately the Movi is going to blow your mind. Stay tuned for the next brief as we start to share the Movi M5 and the use of UAV's with you. For now here is a teaser. We had a one on one with the developers of the Movi this week and well, we will just say " WOW " and..stay tuned.

-Links to Movi M5-

Click HERE for Movi M5

Click HERE for Movi M5 with a UAV

- Brief in review -

Images with People:

In our last brief we went over adding people to some of your Spaces content. We thought it would be fun to share a couple of the new concepts that came across our desk just the other day. What we love about these images is that the story is completed for the final buyer yet it's still vague enough for broad final usage.

Well done AsiaPhotoWorks these are wonderful examples of adding the human element to the environment and marrying the two perfectly. We hope to see more and more of this content start to come into Spaces we are very confident that when done properly these will become Spaces top sellers. If you need any support on concepts for a shoot please drop us an e-mail or give us a call we have lots of ideas to share.

Gadgets:

Two HDR tools and apps

In the last brief we reviewed a couple of HDR tools that we thought were worth a look. Now that we have had time to order them up and do some field testing we wanted to give you some feedback as to how well they performed.

TriggerTrap:

Well, the only trap this offered was when we threw down $30 for their device. After downloading the app to our iPhone we were ready for the first test. A simple one to start with, we did a 5 frame bracket. After following a very easy interface we pushed the TriggerTrap app button, then waited and watched. Well, it did actually work, but as far as what it did, that is when the disappointment set in. We got 5 exposures one time, we got 3 another, we even got 15 with the same settings. We got different results every time. So, we only wasted $30 to do a quick review. To sum it up, if anyone is interested in owning one, drop us a line we'll give you ours.

Shutterbug Remote Fire:

Well, once again this tool has some nice features, but what we were really after was a way to trigger our camera for multiple exposures to be used in creating an HDR (High Dynamic Range) image. This tool is great for triggering your camera from a wireless remote app used through your iPhone. For triggering and for setting up time lapse sequence this is a great tool however, the reason for buying was to help with our HDR capture.

Unfortunately, a great tool has been limited by only allowing three frames for an HDR. One on, one over and one under. As professionals you have to have the flexibility to shoot as many brackets as needed to cover the entire dynamic range of an image. Being left to only use three frames limits our professional DSLR to being more like a low end point and shoot.

We view the Shutterbug Remote Fire as a great wireless triggering tool. It focuses every time you push the button if you are set to auto focus which we thought was very helpful. It will allow you to capture HDR brackets if you use the bracketing in your camera and then use the device to trigger the actual bracket. However, we could not get it to bracket our Canon 1Ds mark 3 through its own interface.

We are big fans of the Promote which you can find HERE for triggering and setting up our HDR's. It is more expensive than these other two we reviewed, but in the long run the flexibility that the Promote offers from time lapse to HDR bracketing is well thought out and very user friendly.

We hope this saved you all a bit of time even if we didn't find a cheaper alternative. We will keep a close eye out for any new tools that we feel will help you execute your work in a more cost effective and timely manner. If there is ever a topic or piece of equipment you feel would be helpful to learn more about, please contact us and let us know. We will do our best to get you the information you

need to make tomorrow a bit easier than today.

Oloneo

Looking for a new processor for your HDR's? We think these guys offer answers to some of the issues we have all had to deal with in our HDR processing. From halos and noise to even relighting your scene, this company offers a new approach that appears fast and seems to address many of the problems we have dealt with in the past. Unfortunately they only offer it for PC's at this time, so we cannot offer a field test, but if you are a PC based user, you might want to try out their free 30 day trial. The trial operates as a full version for 30 days. If you like it, let us know so we can share with everyone. Check out their videos. If they can deliver what they say, this could be a real gem.

Click HERE for Oloneo page

- Summertime Shooting -

The stock industry is more competitive than ever before and just pointing your camera and recording a subject well is not going to get you to the top of the industry these days. We need to craft a story with every image as it is our images that support copy and advertising. Every ad is a

story and one of the best tools for our buyers is the use of images to share their story.

As more and more images are being created every day the need to keep your production value at its strongest is what is going to assure you strong sales for your entire career. If you snap a pic on your vacation when you are walking around and make a couple of dollars that's great but that not what drew us to photography in the first place.

We imagine most of you can remember when the photo bug first bit you. It was so exciting to take those first few pics with nothing ahead of you but time. Now with years under your belt it can sometimes be hard to remember why you ventured here in the first place. It is your love for photography coupled with your ability to build a business model around that passion that keeps you working and making a living at what you truly love.

If you can continue to connect with that passion when you are producing your content for stock you will not only create amazing photos you will also realize you still love what you are doing. When you approach your shooting from this perspective it might take a bit more pre-visualizing and planning, but having a clear picture will always leave you with a more finished product and a less stressful time during the process allowing you to truly embrace your passionate side.

There are a few questions that every photographer producing stock should ask themselves when creating their next shot list. Is there a market for my concept, is my concept realistic from a logistic standpoint, and how can I make it stand out as "Best in Class".

If you haven't already please stop and consider what application your next upload or image could be used for by a potential buyer. The more we get you to think like buyers, the better you will be at making the images that are in demand. We know that if you take the time to conceptualize your shoot and start building shot lists that speak to what buyers are looking for you will save yourself not only time and money, but the images you do craft will show strong returns for years to come.

We have gathered new information about content that not only Spaces would love to have, but through our research seems to have some pretty big holes in our distributors collections as well. Let's take a moment to look at some of the subject matter that not only Spaces can use, but that have sold well over time, as was well as what is trending today in strong stock production .

Gardening is always a strong subject and finding new ways to capture it is the key to separating from the pack. This version of watering offers a fresh perspective rather than the low angle of grass being saturated by an oscillating sprinkler; in this shot the POV allows the viewer to be smack dab in the action and reads clearly at any size thumbnail.

This image is not finished, but it was the best story telling we could find when surfing the net of stock imagery using the Key Words "Car Wash No People". A bucket in the foreground filled with bubbles and the right color sponge and props, or a car in the background out of focus with the sun flaring from the back would be a great start to improving the content that is available in the market today.

Another fun summer project that now applies to conserving energy is laundry drying on a clothes line. This is a great shoot to put together, but you will need the right location to start with. There are several shots that could be created with a laundry day shoot. Once again the light and location are a big part of making this image work. It has to be a clean environment in every detail. Fresh and clean is the message, so anything that supports those words is going to help and anything that doesn't is going to distract. As you start to play this image building game you will find it easier and easier with every shoot.

Barbecue and outdoor dining are a big part of summer and a great way for buyers to promote their summer ads and posts. Although we all barbecue at some time, this is not a shoot that should be part of your families dinner. This shoot, as with all your professional image making, should be about the shoot first and foremost. Finding the right location and deciding what you are going to cook are just the start of making this image as strong as it is. No distractions just great light good propping and solid composition. This meal serves itself.

Summer activities are also a great subject for the warm long days ahead. We offer this image as an example of a summer activity that shares the fun of summer and could also represent some big key words for stock. Winning, competition, defeat, all topics that are big sellers and are all covered by this one image. To complete this image the biggest single deciding factor for strong sales is the light and the environment. This is not a grey cloudy day with horse shoes sitting in mud, this environment is rural yet pristine and supports the concept completely. Without the light this image would struggle for sales, even though the composition is strong .

- Laptops on Holiday -

When we take vacations these days we are usually accompanied by our laptops. Although this is a very strong subject the amount of content out in the market that places your friend the laptop on location is very limited. You will need to execute this image with good story telling skills strong locations and of coarse magical light. Here are a few examples we believe tell the story of your

laptops most recent holiday.

- Get Graphic -

In all of the content you create for Spaces, less is almost always more. Here is a look at a few

images that represent summer but with a very clean graphic approach. When searching in image collections you will find over and over clean, simple, and beautifully lit will catch the attention of your eye as well as buyers over and over.

- Tomorrow looks Green -

As we are all aware the trend in todays crop production is to be as organic as possible. Indoor

greenhouses are becoming more and more a part of our landscape. This market is one of the few industries that reaches every walk of our lives, from home gardens to large Hot houses indoor cultivation is growing leaps and bounds.

We need this content more than ever before and even though we are talking about getting dirty, mess is the last thing we want to see when producing content for this ever growing industry.

Make sure you take the time to pull the dead leaves and give the ground a quick rake, whatever it takes to keep your buyers eye on the prize rather than some bothersome distraction you thought was okay because of your subject matter.

Here are a few examples to get you started, we need close ups, large scale commercial production, and home gardens but it has to be done very well. If you look into the market you will see that even though this is a very strong subject for todays market doing it well is not as easy as it seems. If you take the time these images will continue to sell for a very long time.

- Summer Vacation -

Summer holidays are a big seller for stock so we thought we would add a few images we thought were strong but also unique. The list is long and include topics like, travel, hotel living, eating outdoors and camping. Once again the more clean and graphic you can make your images while still offering added value to your production the easier they are when viewing the thumbnail, and catching the eye of your potential buyer.

There is another way to shoot that doesn't work for every image but when it does it adds a great deal of versatility and added exposure for your work.

If you can create a square image that allows a final buyer to crop the image for either horizontal

use or Vertical while still keeping the message clear with both crops you have removed the concern for buyers as to the format of your image. Like we said it doesn't work for every image but is definitely something you want to consider when shooting your stock images.

The other thing that factors into a square image is when it is being viewed as a thumbnail. We might have mentioned this before but it never hurts to revisit a trick that is a guarantee. When you upload a square format to any stock agency collection that image is going to end up on a page of thumbnails with your competition.

Since stock agencies thumbnail pages are designed to fit either a horizontal or a vertical image they have to leave enough real estate for an image to work in either direction. This space is actually a square on your agencies page. By uploading a square format to your agencies you allow for your thumbnail to be the biggest on the page with the other 59 competitors. Add this larger thumbnail with the opportunity to crop in either direction and you have made your next buyers job that much easier.Don't believe us, take a look at any stock agency you will see it immediately.

- Lounging by the Pool -

The summer is going to offer up locations that have not been available all winter long. This is the time to start networking and finding your summer locations. Swimming pools seem to be just about everywhere these days and if you can create a clean creative spin on this classic summer subject buyers will always be looking for a new fresh approach. We need pristine clean sparkling images when we deal with this summertime activity. The buyer needs to be able to smell the chlorine when they see your image so keep things sparkling when shooting around the pool.

Adding the human element to your summertime production does not mean we need to see happy people jumping off diving boards to meet our buyers requests. This image offers a spin on a Spaces shoot that adds the human element without even the need for a model release. If you find yourself at the pool for the day shooting please contact us, we have many ideas we can share with you.

On many of your Spaces shoots the more you can offer the buyer the feeling of being a part of the image the more your sales will reflect your efforts. Create a setting that allows viewers to place themselves in the shot. This application in advertising is used over and over, when on any shoot for Spaces the more you can place the final user in the image the better. Remember on all your shoots to make the image as inviting to the audience as possible once again this is a great tool to tie an emotional response to your potential buyers.

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This doesn't have to be a summer shoot if you can find an indoor pool. We want you to look at this image as it offers all the things a good pool location shoot should include. Pristine, clean bright, and simple. Add all these ingredients then mix well and serve, your buyers won't have to ask for the recipe they will see it first hand.

Well there you have it team, the weather is calling for you to get out and create your vision of what summer is to the buyers of todays stock photography. With each of these creative briefs we want you to pay attention to what we are offering, but at the same time we don't want to take you out of your own creative vision. One of our favorite parts of shooting for the stock industry is the creative process from pre-visualizing our shot lists to obtaining our next location. If you find yourself in need of a creative boost please do not hesitate to drop us an e-mail or give us a call. We want to make you the best stock photographers that have graced this industry and together we will rule the world :) Have a great start to your summer and we'll see you back here in July.

-Top Sellers at Spaces-

We wanted to start sharing with everyone some of the top sellers over the past few years here at Spaces Images. These are some of the most frequent selling images in our collection. We don't offer this information to try and get everyone to run out and shoot their unique version of the same

shot. On the contrary, we offer up the information to show you how our collection is truly based on the diversity of our imagery.

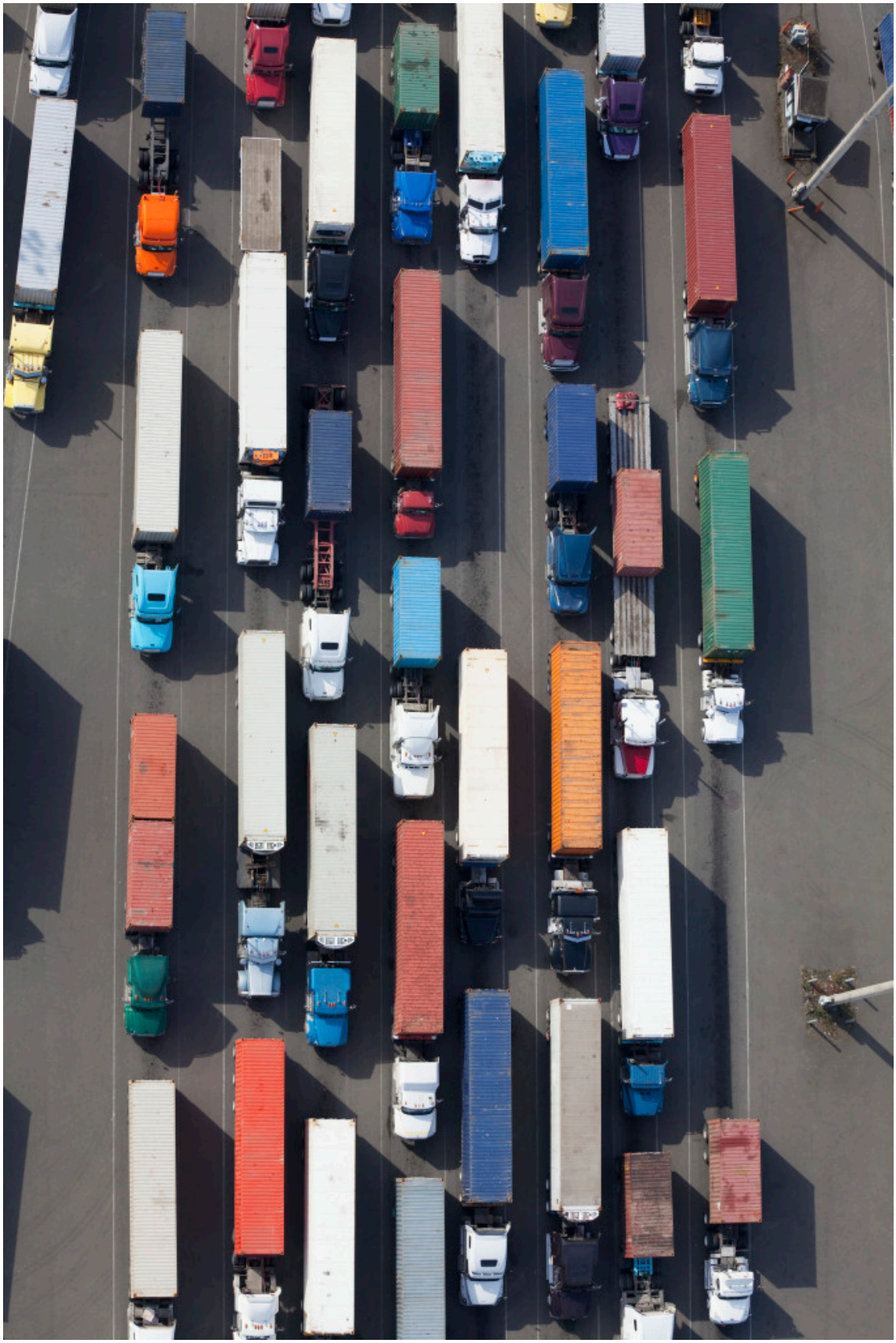
It is through all of you sharing your own vision of what you are moved to capture that makes Spaces Images so visually strong. So here ya go team, these are some of the best sellers at Spaces Images. We will keep updating this information on a regular basis. We hope you enjoy viewing these images as much as we did the first time they came across our desks. Thank you all for sharing your incredible talent with Spaces Images.

As with many of Spaces skylines, when they are done well they are always good sellers. The one thing we would like to point your attention to is the processing of this image. HDR is a great tool when used properly but we cannot over state this enough. Do not make your images look like they have been processed using HDR. We want to embrace the tool to create a true representation of the location. HDR is a great tool when used properly, but as with every tool, if it is used incorrectly it can actually cost you a great deal of sales, especially over the coarse of time. Here the image may have been a High Dynamic Range image or it might not have been. Your focus as an image creator is to make your images technically strong. Anyone can make a quick HDR, but does it sell?

We can safely say that our biggest selling HDR images do not have an illustrated look to them at all. Please use HDR, but use a soft touch and keep it realistic. If you are in doubt, one thing we like to do is finish our work step away from the computer for a while and then revisit it later. Get your eyes off the screen and out in the real world then return to your image. Does it look real? keep practicing and if possible, ask another person for feedback. It is so easy to get lost in the surreal effect that HDR can deliver, but we want to appeal to our buyers first and foremost and heavily HDR images are not going to stand the test of time.

It's all about story telling. This room shot all cleaned up and documented would not have produced very strong sales. There is nothing about the design of the room or the furnishings that make it stand out for buyers, so it all comes down to the story telling created by adding props that offer buyers a story for their final use. Yes, there is a property release, but if this image had not been stylized to tell a story, the sales of this image would certainly not place it among the top at Spaces. Please remember, you do not have to get a Property Release to the Taj Mahal to make money off your locations. This basic room proves just that. It is so plain and basic, why would we have stopped to shoot it? But by adding all the finishing touches that puts you in a teenagers room, the image suddenly becomes desirable to many buyers. Please take the time to start looking for stories

you can tell with your shots. We can assure you, if you take the time, a basic location can produce strong revenue returns. It just takes a bit of creative license.



The POV of this image allows it to have very little competition in the stock industry. But even more than just the POV it's the POV married with the subject matter that makes buyer take notice of this image. The shipping industry has always been a strong seller in stock and will remain so for years to come. This image could easily be 10-15 years old and it would still be relevant to buyers today giving it very strong legs. No property release is needed here, just a clear understanding of what sells in the stock industry. Spaces loves all of our property released content, but this image is another example of how Spaces Images can produce strong revenue without a property release being needed.

The art of creating beautiful imagery is what keeps all of us out there hunting, trying to obtain that perfect frame. It isn't hard for us to understand why this image has sold well. Some images just cannot be produced no matter how much money you throw at them. A great artist will have far more success than the average player just from their experience, but you still cannot go out and just create this image next Tuesday. This image is personal and it offers buyers that special moment when everything just comes together for a photographer. The more we are out with our camera shooting the more opportunity there is to capture these magic moments, but all in all you

just have to enjoy it when you nail it and move on when you don't. This was a time when the photographer nailed it.

By peaking into this image through the door you begin to feel that you are more of a part of the image. It creates a voyeur effect that allows the viewers to feel more involved in the moment.
Health and fitness is always a strong seller for the stock industry, but one very important factor to remember is you have to keep it super clean. The same goes for any shots of restaurants and food services. If there are crumbs all over the floor of your restaurant image, the final buyer is not going to come back, so lets all remember, when we are dealing with health, food, beauty or technology, a clean image is always going to outsell a messy one.
One other area I would like to draw attention to is the use of HDR in this image. By using the HDR tool with a gentle touch we are able to hold detail in a shot that is being lit by multiple sources. The window outside looks more like it was captured on film rather than showing the extreme detail we want to try and avoid when creating our HDR's.
Once again the purpose of the HDR tool is to enhance an image and make it appear like it did to the eye when you were there capturing the moment. There was a great deal more data that we

could have accessed outside the window, but when we apply that information to the image, we start to change the way we look at photographs.
Years have passed since HDR has entered the photo community, but when was the last time you saw an overly processed HDR used in an advertisement? Next time you pick up a magazine try to find an overly saturated illustration style of HDR. They are not there for a reason. Please embrace HDR, we do, just remember to "Keep it Real"

Once again the theme is health and fitness. The payoff for this image comes from it's hard to obtain property release and the image's pristine appearance. When was the last time you went to a public pool? Well through our own experience, the need to retouch and get this image to be spotless is a must if buyers are going to consider it for their next project. By keeping the image clean and the angles simple we start to see the image for what it is, even when it is a tiny thumbnail.
When we are editing for the Spaces collection one thing we will do with an image that is on the fence regarding acceptance or rejection is to reduce the size to a thumbnail and see how it reads. By keeping your images clean and simple with their lines you not only allow for the image to be recognized and clicked on when it is next to 59 other tiny competitors, but you allow clear room for

copy space and angles that support that copy without being distracting.

This one for us is a bit of a no brainer. To get this image property released has guaranteed that it will produce revenue for years to come. This is a high priced item on the checklist for your shoots. When you gain access to this kind of location please let us know. We would love to work closely with all of Spaces contributors to assure you get the most millage out of your hard to obtain property released locations. Working together with us at Spaces will help to make sure you get every bit of millage out of your next big production. This image has sold well and we are confident that it will continue to have a strong returns for many years.

We like to throw one out at you guys that will make you scratch your head a bit. You might notice that the laptop in this image is quite dated. We even considered not adding this image to the collection because of the technology issue. However, It just goes to show that when you craft a beautiful image, even technology won't stand in the way of getting good sales returns. If you bypass the age of the laptop you will notice this image has the two things that stand out in all of our best sellers. It is spotless and the light is beautiful.
The picnic table it is on has been cleaned to perfection. We imagine some of you are saying "Yes, but is that reality"? Remember that as stock artist one of our jobs is to make our everyday world appear to be a beautiful place, much more so than reality. So please do not get caught up in an editorial vision. We are here to make beautiful photos that intrigue our viewers. We are not image recorders we are image crafters. If the setting is clean and clearly obvious as a thumbnail and the light is beautiful then sales are sure to follow close behind.

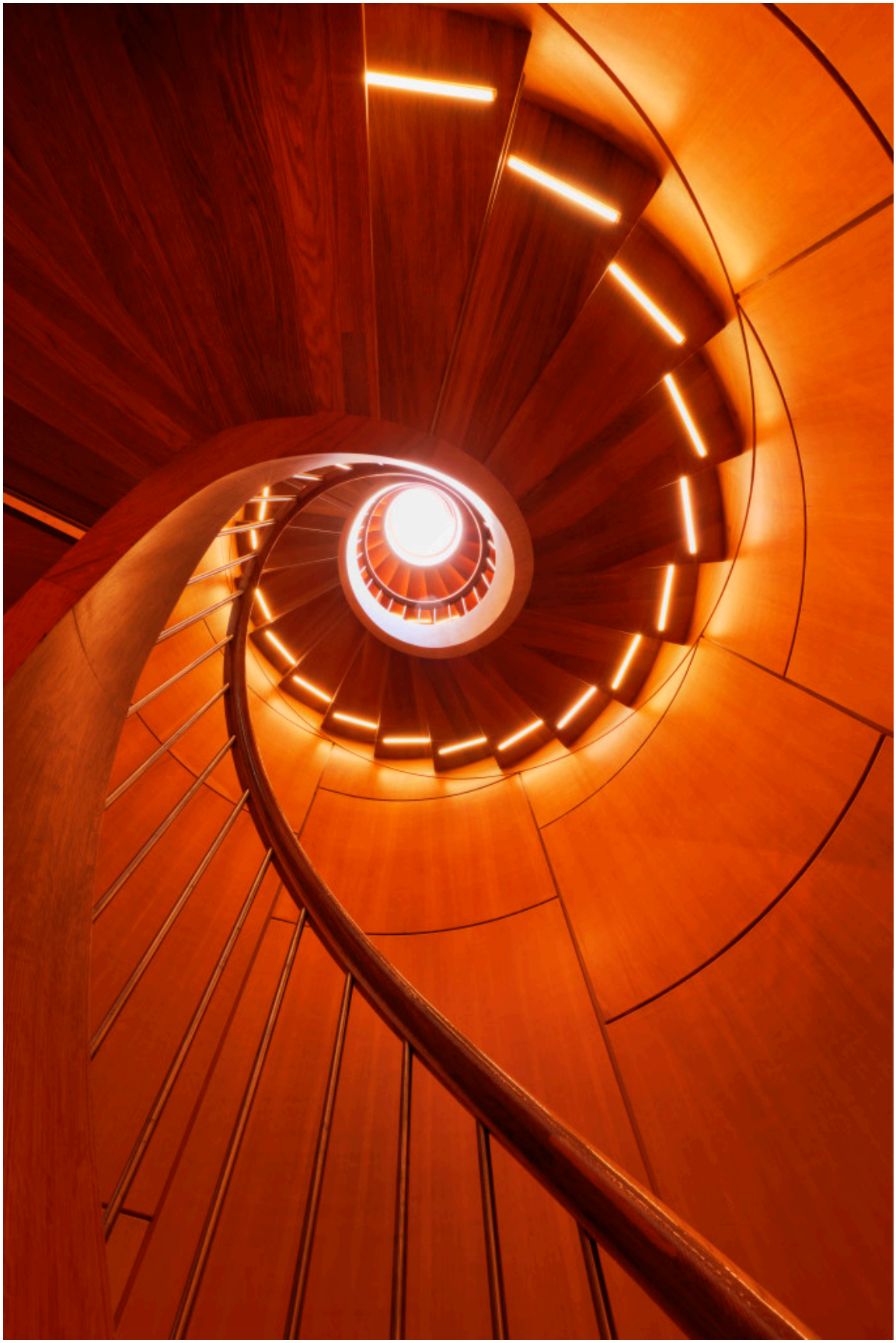
We feel like we are playing the same record over and over sometimes, but that is because there is a method to success in shooting for stock. We have seen it in all areas of stock, from lifestyle to still life. If you can combine these elements when thinking about your next production you will see the returns for your efforts pay off very nicely.

Keep it Clean - Only include information in your frame that helps support your message. If it doesn't add to your message then it detracts and distracts, so pay attention to your entire frame and make sure that the entire frame supports your vision while at the same time keeping it simple.

Lighting - This doesn't mean that every image has to look like it was touched by the hand of God. What we are referring to is, does the light support the feeling or subject that you are trying to present? If it's a moody feeling you want to convey in your story then the light needs to support that emotion.

Story Telling - Over and over we see images that tell a story as apposed to images that only record a location are far more popular. Adding the right prop to the scene can make it appear more

organic. If this image was just the location and didn't incorporate the addition of the props making it appear like a lecture was about to take place the sales on this image would not be nearly as strong as they are by adding some papers and pencils, telling a simple story. It might seem like a small difference but we assure you that taking the time to help tell a story with your images will result in much higher sales.



We think this image tells the story of why it has sold well all on its own. We have many stairways at Spaces maybe even a couple too many, but when an image like this appears, it doesn't take a genius to realize it has sales potential. This has it all, property release, beautiful location, and magical light. Then the artist took all of their skill and chose the perfect angle to draw the viewers eye into the image. This is a rule to apply to all of your imagery that will separate you from the ever growing number of part time professionals. Where does the image take your eye? Does it keep you trapped in the image or does your eye wander all over, not sure where to rest? This comes back to keeping an image clean and simple for the final buyer. If you don't already, we suggest you start paying close attention to advertising and the imagery they choose. You will see over and over again that simple and clean is what the buyer is looking to convey in their message more-so than ever before. These are the tools we use as professionals to keep us ahead of the ever growing pool of part timers with professional cameras. When you see an image like this appear in your viewfinder, you have to pat yourself on the back. You are obviously a very talented professional.

- Spaces Images RM vs RF -

The stock industry has seen some changes over the past 5 years. One area that Spaces has kept a close eye on is the two models we represent our photographers content in, Rights Managed and Royalty Free. We are always striving to produce the strongest returns for all of our contributors, so any changes we make have been thought through in great detail and are based on direct data we have from the past 4 years of sales. Going into our 5th year, Spaces Images has been able to accrue more data on sales than ever before and it is through the analysis of this information that we share this news with all of you.

By tracking our sales over the past two years we have started to see a very clear pattern on where our strongest sales are in both the Rights Managed and the Royalty Free models. When we first opened the doors at Spaces we had spent a great deal of time in meetings with stock agencies discussing where our content would produce the strongest revenue. At that time the consensus seemed very clear that Spaces Images, due to its hard to acquire Property Released content, would best be suited for the Rights Managed model.

Though we have seen some very large single sales in RM it is starting to show that our Royalty Free imagery is not only growing in its sales, but in its frequency of sales, providing a more stable return per quarter.

There are several factors that play into the new direction of supporting RF over RM. As an editor, when selecting content to go into RF as apposed to RM, we are always able to take a larger selection of images for Royalty Free than we are for Rights Managed. There is always a balancing

act as to what will create more revenue, a smaller collection of images in the Rights Managed division, or a larger selection of images in the Royalty Free collection. Over time we are seeing that with the exception of a few large sales, the strength of our revenue has shifted more towards our Royalty Free content.

When you look at Spaces content it's clear that our strongest imagery is in our RM license model, yet lately we are seeing more growth in our RF division. We believe that If we start to move some of our stronger content of property released imagery into the RF model we will have very little competition from any other agency allowing us to provide a much stronger more stable revenue stream to our contributors. The effort you all take of getting Property Releases for your content is what separates us from anything else in the Royalty Free model and sales are showing this to be true.

To make sure this was the best direction for Spaces to take we have been slowly uploading Andersen Ross content into the RF model only to track sales without putting any of our contributors work at risk. It has been through this test that we have started to see stronger sales for our own property released content than ever before. Andersen Ross will be placing all of our work into the RF model for the coming year and we will continue to report back on our results.

We still support any and all of our contributing photographers that do not want their content in Royalty Free. We understand that everyone has their own reasons for where their work goes and we do not want to hinder that effort. If you want to have your work placed in the RM model only, we can always accommodate this request. Just let us know and we will make sure your work stays in Rights Managed only.

We do not want to abandon our RM collection but we do feel that we need to pick only the most unique images for RM and start moving more of our content towards Royalty Free in order to provide a stronger revenue for everyone. At the end of the day we are all looking for the same thing, the best return from our efforts. We spend a great deal of time analyzing our sales and trying to see where tomorrow will put us and it is through these efforts that we are starting to see stronger and more consistent sales in the RF category.

To close we want to add that we are very excited about the work that has been coming across our desk lately. The new talent that has joined our group is producing some exceptional content. With your talent and our new distribution, the ability to get your content in front of buyers eyes is stronger than ever before. With the addition of Getty Images, Gallery Stock, and Masterfile as well as several other top agencies joining our team of distributors, Spaces Images will see its strongest growth year ever.

If you haven't shot for us in a while and want to touch base please drop us a line. We are always excited to hear from all of you and we feel that there is nothing like one-on-one time to get questions answered and maybe add a bit of creative support when it comes to your next location.

Over the coming quarter we will be contacting all of our contributors directly to answer any questions you might have, or maybe just to trade a couple of good recipes. Whatever the reason, it's always fun to speak one-on-one so if you have any good jokes save them for us, we'll be calling soon.